

Message Text

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PAGE 01 BEIRUT 04383 141013 Z

12

ACTION NEA-12

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 EUR-25 ADP-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 NSAE-00

NSCE-00 SSO-00 USIE-00 CCO-00 INRE-00 PM-09 H-02

INR-10 L-03 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SS-15 IO-12

EB-11 COME-00 TRSE-00 OMB-01 SCEM-02 INT-08 SY-07

RSR-01 /144 W

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O P 140904 Z APR 73

FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1660

INFO AMCONSUL DHAHRAN

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY NICOSIA

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

USINT CAIRO

USUN NEW YORK PRIORITY 2280

C O N F I D E N T I A L BEIRUT 4383

DEPARTMENT PASS CAIRO

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS, ENRG, ETRN, LE, US

SUBJECT: EXPLOSIONS DAMAGE TAPLINE TERMINAL STORAGE TANKS

SUMMARY: EXPLOSIONS PRESUMED BUT NOT PROVEN TO BE WORK
OF ARAB GUERRILLAS DESTROYED ONE CRUDE OIL STORAGE TANK,
DAMAGED THREE OTHERS AT TAPLINE TERMINAL NEAR SIDON
EARLY TODAY. NO CASUALTIES. DAMAGE APPEARS TO BE MODERATE
BUT TAPLINE DOES NOT WISH EXTENT PUBLICIZED. EXPORT AND
REFINERY OPERATIONS COULD RESUME SHORTLY. END SUMMARY.

1. TAPLINE SPOKESMAN GAVE EMBASSY THIS ACCOUNT:

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PAGE 02 BEIRUT 04383 141013 Z

A. ABOUT 2 A. M. LOCAL (MIDNIGHT GMT), EXPLOSIONS FOLLOWED BY LARGE FIRE DESTROYED ONE OF TWO LARGE TRANS ARABIAN PIPELINE (TAPLINE) CRUDE OIL STORAGE TANKS USED TO SUPPLY MEDRECO REFINERY AT ZAHRAINI, NEAR SIDON, SEVERELY DAMAGED OTHER TANK. TAPLINE AND MEDRECO WHOLLY AMERICAN- OWNED. OTHER EXPLOSIONS DAMAGED TWO LARGE CRUDE OIL STORAGE TANKS IN TAPLINE TANK FARM, ABOUT HALF MILE DISTANT, USED FOR TAPLINE CRUDE EXPORTS, AND EXPLOSION SLIGHTLY DAMAGED RADIO CONTROL STATION. SOME EXPLOSIVES APPEARED TO BE TIME CHARGES. A TANKER, ESSO BREMEN, HAD BEEN LOADING BUT LEFT UNDAMAGED.

B. EXPLOSIONS WERE WORK OF " LARGE" RAIDING PARTY WHICH PRESUMED BE ARAB GUERRILLAS ALTHOUGH IDENTITY NOT RPT NOT KNOWN. AS IN PAST SABOTAGE INCIDENTS, TAPLINE PROBABLY WILL LEAVE IDENTIFICATION TO PUBLIC AUTHORITIES. RAIDERS OVERPOWERED AND TIED UP THREE TAPLINE EMPLOYEES AND SOME CUSTOMS MEN, PUT THEM IN PIPELINE' S SHORE CONTROL STATION AND WENT ABOUT BUSINESS. SOME SNIPING REPORTED BUT NO CASUALTIES KNOWN.

C. GUARD FORCE NUMBERED ABOUT 20 BUT INSTALLATIONS' LARGE SIZE MAKES SECURITY DIFFICULT. LEBANESE ARMY AND FIRE DEPARTMENTS FROM SIDON AND BEIRUT RESPONDED QUICKLY, APPARENTLY NO RAIDERS CAPTURED.

D. AT DAWN FULL EXTENT OF DAMAGE NOT KNOWN BUT APPEARED TO BE MODERATE ENOUGH TO PERMIT RESUMPTION OF EXPORT AND REFINERY OPERATIONS SHORTLY.

2. COMMENT:

A. ALTHOUGH IDENTIFICATION OF ATTACKERS NOT YET MADE, WE THINK IT OBVIOUS THAT ATTACK ON MEDRECO IS FEDAYEEN REPLY TO ISRAELI RAID ON BEIRUT AS WELL AS CONTINUATION OF STILL EARLIER DECISION STRIKE AT AMERICAN INTERESTS. THERE WERE PREVIOUS REPORTS IN LATE MARCH OF OPERATION PLANNED AGAINST TAPLINE/ MEDRECO.

B. TAPLINE IS FREQUENT TARGET SABOTAGE, THIS 16 TH TIME IT HIT. ABOUT 95 PERCENT OF PIPELINE' S THROUGHOUT EXPORTED, REMAINDER FEEDS MEDRECO REFINERY WHICH SUPPLIES ABOUT
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PAGE 03 BEIRUT 04383 141013 Z

40 PERCENT LEBANESE DOMESTIC PETROLEUM REQUIREMENTS.

TAPLINE DOES NOT WISH EXTENT OF DAMAGE PUBLICIZED, GENERALLY
WISHES MAINTAIN LOW PROFILE THESE MATTERS, LEAVE PUBLIC
STATEMENTS TO PUBLIC AUTHORITIES. TAPLINE SHOULD NOT
BE PUBLICLY CITED AS SOURCE THIS REPORT. WILL PROVIDE FURTHER
DETAILS WHEN AVAILABLE.
BUFFUM

NOTE BY OC/ T: NOT PASSED CAIRO.

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*** Current Classification *** CONFIDENTIAL

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Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: morefirh
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Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
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Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
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30 JUN 2005

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DHAHRAN
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